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A1
wherein the second capture member is adapted to capture the second element by snapping onto the second element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the second element.

16. (Amended) The component of claim 1 wherein one capture member is adapted to receive at least a partial ring and the other capture member is adapted to receive a bar.

17. (Amended) An external fixation component comprising:

A2
(a) a first capture member comprising a planetary member and adapted to receive a first fixation element; and

(b) a second capture member comprising a cooperating surface adapted to receive the planetary member, the second capture member adapted to receive a second fixation element,

wherein one capture member is capable of rotation in more than one axis relative to the other capture member;

wherein the second capture member is adapted to capture the second fixation element by snapping onto the second fixation element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the second fixation element.

A3
32. (Amended) The component of claim 17 wherein one capture member is adapted to receive at least a partial ring and the other capture member is adapted to receive a bar.

A1
40. (Amended) The component of claim 33 wherein the capture member is adapted to receive at least a partial ring.

A3
73. (Amended) The component of claim 41 wherein one capture member is adapted to receive at least a partial ring and the other capture member is adapted to receive a bar.

75. (Amended) An external fixation component comprising:

- A4
- (a) a first capture member comprising
 - (i) a planetary member having inner and outer surfaces and including an aperture adapted to receive a connector,
 - (ii) a channel adapted to receive at least a partial ring; and
 - (b) a second capture member comprising
 - (i) a cooperating surface adapted to receive the planetary member and an aperture adapted to receive a connector,
 - (ii) a channel adapted to receive a fixation element; and
 - (c) a connector comprising
 - (i) an end, and
 - (ii) a shaft;

wherein the shaft of the connector is received in the apertures of the first and second capture members and wherein the end of the connector is received in the planetary member and the planetary member is received in the cooperating surface.

A7
77. (Amended) An external fixation system comprising;

art
A7

a plurality of fixation elements; and
a plurality of fixation components comprising:
a first capture member adapted to capture a first element of an
orthopedic fixation system; and
a second capture member adapted to capture a second element of an
orthopedic fixation system and coupled to the first capture member such that the
coupling allows the first capture member and the second capture member to rotate
about three axes relative to each other;
wherein the coupling is adapted to secure the first and second capture
members from rotation with a single activation;
wherein the second capture member is adapted to capture the second element by
snapping onto the second element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal
axis of the second element.

A8

96. (Amended) The component of claim 77 wherein one capture member is
adapted to receive at least a partial ring and the other capture member is adapted to
receive a bar.

97. (Amended) A method of treating a skeletal condition or injury using an
external fixation system, the method comprising:

(a) inserting a first fixation element into a bone;

(b) capturing the first fixation element in a first fixation component by snapping onto the first fixation element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the first fixation element, the first fixation component comprising:

(i) a first capture member adapted to capture an element of an orthopedic fixation system; and

(ii) a second capture member adapted to capture an element of an orthopedic fixation system and coupled to the first capture member such that the coupling allows the first capture member and the second capture member to rotate about three axes relative to each other;
wherein the coupling is adapted to secure the first and second capture members from rotation with a single activation;

(c) capturing a second fixation element in the first fixation component by snapping onto the second fixation element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the second fixation element; and

(d) engaging the single activation to secure the first and second capture members from rotation.

Please add the following claims 100-112.

100. (New) The external fixation component of claim 1 wherein the first capture member is adapted to capture the first element by snapping onto the first element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the first element.

101. (New) An external fixation component comprising:

(a) a first capture member adapted to capture a first element of an orthopedic fixation system; and

(b) a second capture member adapted to capture a second element of an orthopedic fixation system and coupled to the first capture member such that the coupling allows the first capture member and the second capture member to rotate about three axes relative to each other and the second capture member to rotate about one axis of the second element and move along that axis;

wherein the coupling is adapted to secure the first and second capture members from rotation and secure the second capture member from rotating about and moving along the axis of the second element with a single activation; and

wherein the second capture member is adapted to capture the second element by snapping onto the second element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the second element.

102. (New) The external fixation component of claim 101 wherein the first capture member is adapted to capture the first fixation element by snapping onto the first fixation element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the first fixation element.

103. (New) A capture member for retaining a fixation element of an external fixation system, the capture member comprising:

(a) a base; and

(b) a head movably coupled to the base;

wherein the movement of the head occurs substantially in a plane such that when the head is moved to a first position the fixation element may be placed in a location to be captured between the base and the head, and when the head is moved to a second position the fixation element is captured between the base and the head.

104. (New) The capture member of claim 103 wherein at least a portion of the movement between the head and the base is sliding movement.

105. (New) The capture member of claim 103 wherein the head is biased toward the second position.

106. (New) The external fixation component of claim 75 wherein the channel of the first capture member is adapted to receive at least a partial ring with a rectangular cross section.

107. (New) The external fixation component of claim 75 wherein the channel of the second capture member is adapted to receive a bar.

108. (New) An external fixation component comprising:

(a) a first capture member adapted to capture an element of an orthopedic fixation system; and

(b) a second capture member adapted to capture an element of an orthopedic fixation system and coupled to the first capture member such that the coupling allows the first capture member and the second capture member to rotate about three axes relative to each other;

(c) wherein the coupling comprises at least one ball and socket joint and is adapted to secure the first and second capture members from rotation with a single

activation which applies tension to a member that links the first and second capture members.

109. (New) A component according to claim 108 in which the coupling is adapted to apply tension to the member in an adjustable fashion.

110. (New) A component according to claim 108 in which the coupling comprises two ball and socket joints.

111. (New) A component according to claim 108 in which the ball and socket joints share substantially the same center of rotation.

112. (New) An external fixation device comprising a component according to claim 108.

Supplemental Information Disclosure Statement

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.56, 1.97 and 1.98, Applicants identify the document listed on the modified Form PTO 1449 accompanying this submission. A copy of U.S. Patent No. 6,221,072 is enclosed.

Applicants do not concede that the identified materials constitute prior art within the meaning of the United States patent laws.

Applicants file this paper pursuant to 37 C.F.R. 1.97(b)(3), before issuance of a first Office action on the merits and, therefore, believe that no fee is due in connection with this filing. However, the Commissioner is authorized to debit Deposit Account No. 11-0855 for any such fee due should Applicants be mistaken.

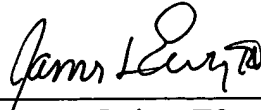
U.S. Serial No. 10/067,052

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PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT AND

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Respectfully submitted,



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(Amended) An external fixation component comprising:

- (a) a first capture member adapted to capture a[n] first element of an orthopedic fixation system; and
- (b) a second capture member adapted to capture a[n] second element of an orthopedic fixation system and coupled to the first capture member such that the coupling allows the first capture member and the second capture member to rotate about three axes relative to each other;
wherein the coupling is adapted to secure the first and second capture members from rotation with a single activation;
wherein the second capture member is adapted to capture the second element by snapping onto the second element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the second element.

16. (Amended) The component of claim 1 wherein one capture member is adapted to receive at least a partial ring and the other capture member is adapted to receive a bar.

17. (Amended) An external fixation component comprising:

- (a) a first capture member comprising a planetary member and adapted to receive a first fixation element; and

(b) a second capture member comprising a cooperating surface adapted to receive the planetary member, the second capture member adapted to receive a second fixation element,

wherein one capture member is capable of rotation in more than one axis relative to the other capture member;

wherein the second capture member is adapted to capture the second fixation element by snapping onto the second fixation element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the second fixation element.

32. (Amended) The component of claim 17 wherein one capture member is adapted to receive at least a partial ring and the other capture member is adapted to receive a bar.

40. (Amended) The component of claim 33 wherein the capture member is adapted to receive at least a partial ring.

73. (Amended) The component of claim 41 wherein one capture member is adapted to receive at least a partial ring and the other capture member is adapted to receive a bar.

75. (Amended) An external fixation component comprising:

- (a) a first capture member comprising
 - (i) a planetary member having inner and outer surfaces and including an aperture adapted to receive a connector,

(ii) a channel adapted to receive at least a partial ring [having a rectangular cross section]; and

(b) a second capture member comprising

(i) a cooperating surface adapted to receive the planetary member and an aperture adapted to receive a connector,

(ii) a channel adapted to receive a [bar]fixation element; and

(c) a connector comprising

(i) an end, and

(ii) a shaft;

wherein the shaft of the connector is received in the apertures of the first and second capture members and wherein the end of the connector is received in the planetary member and the planetary member is received in the cooperating surface.

77. (Amended) An external fixation system comprising;

a plurality of fixation elements; and

a plurality of fixation components comprising:

a first capture member adapted to capture a[n] first element of an orthopedic fixation system; and

a second capture member adapted to capture a[n] second element of an orthopedic fixation system and coupled to the first capture member such that the coupling allows the first capture member and the second capture member to rotate about three axes relative to each other;

wherein the coupling is adapted to secure the first and second capture members from rotation with a single activation;
wherein the second capture member is adapted to capture the second element by snapping onto the second element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the second element.

96. (Amended) The component of claim 77 wherein one capture member is adapted to receive at least a partial ring and the other capture member is adapted to receive a bar.

97. (Amended) A method of treating a skeletal condition or injury using an external fixation system, the method comprising:

(a) inserting a first fixation element into a bone;
(b) capturing the first fixation element in a first fixation component by snapping onto the first fixation element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the first fixation element, the first fixation component comprising:

(i) a first capture member adapted to capture an element of an orthopedic fixation system; and

(ii) a second capture member adapted to capture an element of an orthopedic fixation system and coupled to the first capture member such that the coupling allows the first capture member and the second capture member to rotate about three axes relative to each other;

wherein the coupling is adapted to secure the first and second capture members from rotation with a single activation;

(c) capturing a second fixation element in the first fixation component by snapping onto the second fixation element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the second fixation element; and

(d) engaging the single activation to secure the first and second capture members from rotation.

100. (New) The external fixation component of claim 1 wherein the first capture member is adapted to capture the first element by snapping onto the first element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the first element.

101. (New) An external fixation component comprising:

(a) a first capture member adapted to capture a first element of an orthopedic fixation system; and

(b) a second capture member adapted to capture a second element of an orthopedic fixation system and coupled to the first capture member such that the coupling allows the first capture member and the second capture member to rotate about three axes relative to each other and the second capture member to rotate about one axis of the second element and move along that axis;

wherein the coupling is adapted to secure the first and second capture members from rotation and secure the second capture member from rotating about and moving along the axis of the second element with a single activation; and

wherein the second capture member is adapted to capture the second element by snapping onto the second element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the second element.

102. (New) The external fixation component of claim 101 wherein the first capture member is adapted to capture the first fixation element by snapping onto the first fixation element from substantially perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the first fixation element.

103. (New) A capture member for retaining a fixation element of an external fixation system, the capture member comprising:

- (a) a base; and
- (b) a head movably coupled to the base;

wherein the movement of the head occurs substantially in a plane such that when the head is moved to a first position the fixation element may be placed in a location to be captured between the base and the head, and when the head is moved to a second position the fixation element is captured between the base and the head.

104. (New) The capture member of claim 103 wherein at least a portion of the movement between the head and the base is sliding movement.

105. (New) The capture member of claim 103 wherein the head is biased toward the second position.

106. (New) The external fixation component of claim 75 wherein the channel of the first capture member is adapted to receive at least a partial ring with a rectangular cross section.

107. (New) The external fixation component of claim 75 wherein the channel of the second capture member is adapted to receive a bar.